DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

767.90d15

SEE 890d.401/5 FOR #132

FROM Beirut (Keeley) DATED Feb.20, 1931

XXX NAME 1—1172 ero

REGARDING: the settlement in principle of the frontier question between Turkey and Syria.

767.90D15/26

dew

NO. 132

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
BEIRUT, SYRIA

FEB 20 1931

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: Racial affinities of the people taken into Syria by the frontier changes in the north.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.

SIR:

I have the honor to report as follows in reference to the informal comments of the Near Eastern Division on despatch No. 470 of June 6, 1930, requesting information as to the racial affinities of the people taken into Syria by the frontier changes in northern Syria.

According to a well informed French official, many villages taken into Syria by the northern frontier changes were uninhabited when the French troops took over the area from the Turks, but an influx of settlers into the deserted villages began almost immediately thereafter and has steadily continued, until at the present time all the villages are repopulated. This immigration is thought to have come largely from villages on the Turkish side of the frontier, many of which, it is reported, have decreased in size or have been entirely deserted. This same official tells me that during a visit to Mosul prior to the rectification of the Northern frontier the Kurds of Iraq, dissatisfied with

Arab

Arab rule, inquired with interest as to French intentions in respect to the Haut Djesiret or Bec de Canard area. It is thought, therefore, that some of the Kurdish influx into this area since the French occupation has come from Mosul, as well as from Turkey.

Although my official informant said that the High Commission itself is not in possession of accurate data as to the present population of the territory ceded to Syria by the frontier changes or as to the racial affinities of its inhabitants, he was inclined to accept as fairly accurate for the present the following percentages based upon information which I obtained from my Turkish Colleague: about 70% Kurds, 15% Syrian Arabs, 10% Turks, and 5% Armenians, mostly Kurdish speaking, who have come from Turkey during the past year. It is not thought that the population of this territory or of the Haut Djesiret as a whole will become sufficiently stabilised for another two years to permit of an accurate census being taken, particularly as effect is only about to be given to the terms of the Protocol of March 17, 1930, between France and Turkey permitting the inhabitants of the territories affected by the frontier changes to opt for Syrian or Turkish nationality and to fix their future domicile in accordance with their decision.

Although Armenian families are being settled along the frontier and farther to the south along the Euphrates, there seems to be little justification for believing that the French have any thought of creating an Armenian state, as such, in Northern Syria. In fact, the policy of

developing

developing this region appears to be intended as much to leaven the mixture by encouraging the Syrian Arabs to establish villages there as to take care of the refugees from abroad. A number of mushroom towns have sprung up all through this area, and old sites have become greatly enlarged. Hassetché, for instance, which a few years back was a small village of a couple dozen houses is now understood to comprise several thousand inhabitants.

The settlement in principle of the frontier question with Turkey seems to have inspired confidence in the future possibilities of this area, and if developments there continue as at present this region bids well to become an important producing and trading center, as well as a center of political interest. In reference to the latter possibility, I may say that I have learned confidentially from my Turkish Colleague that Turkey does not look with favor upon the settlement of its traditional enemies along its southern frontier. Although he maintains that the aims of his government are entirely pacific and that Turkey has no desire to regain its lost territories now under French and British mandate, he points out that one cannot foresee what the future may call forth and that should Turkey ever decide to invade Syria, an eventuality against which he feels the Mandatory Authorities may be attempting to guard by settling the Kurds and Armenians along the frontier as a buffer population, these elements could be crushed without perceptibly stemming the Turkish advance, with the sole result that another slaughter of Kurds and Armenians would be added to the already

regrettable

regrettable total of such incidents credited to Turkey but the primary responsibility for which, as in this instance, he states may be traced to the Machiavellian politics of the western powers.

Naturally the immigration of Kurds and Armenians into Syria presents to the Mandatory Authorities a problem that is not easy of satisfactory solution. I am inclined to believe that the French do not welcome this immigration and that in deflecting it into the Haut Djezirat and Euphrates region they are motivated more by a desire to prevent further concentration of refugees in the city camps, where they breed communism and disease, than by any wish to use them as a buffer against the Turks.

The Department may rest assured that I will continue to follow and report any developments of interest.

Respectfully yours,

J. H. KEELEY, JR

J.H. Keeley, Jr.,
American Consul.

Distribution:
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1 copy to the American Consulate, Baghdad.
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JHK/TAH

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the signed original.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 890d.9111/31 FOR 4

FROM Beirut (Gould) DATED Mar.1, 1932
NAME

REGARDING: the massing of Turkish troops near the northern frontier of Syria. Apparently this is for the purpose of checking smuggling.

dew

1--1127 o.r.o.

767.90015/27

767.90d.15

Turks Mass Troops on the Border

The Turks are concentrating military forces in the region of Hajilar and Killis, near the northern frontier of Syria, according to press reports.[1] Armenians fear that the Turks intend to occupy eventually the Sanjak of Alexandretta and that it is a pretense on Turkey's part to claim that the concentration is for the purpose of checking smuggling.

Inasmuch as there is a great deal of smuggling going on, the writer of this report is of the opinion that Turkey is merely endeavoring to improve the situation.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 767.00/44 FOR #71

FROM Turkey (Sherrill) DATED July 9,1932

TO NAME

1—1127 ••

REGARDING: Turkish-Syrian frontier.
Believes that visit by M. Chauvel, political director of Syria, in Ankara may concern settlement of the --.

767.900 15/28

leb

No. 71 Istanbul, July 9, 1932.

SUBJECT: Press report of former American Ambassador's statement, including reference to Turkey's southern policy.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

Referring to my despatch No. 12, May 26, 1932, I beg to report that July 6, the Turkish newspaper, (published in French) LE JOURNAL D'ORIENT, published, on the
1/ front page an article (copy enclosed) which quotes Mr. Grew from the JAPAN TIMES AND MAIL, of Tokyo, as saying: "Even if Turkey were offered it she would not accept the retrocession to her of Syria, or any other territory, she has lost". Conversation with Mr. Shaw indicates that this was the opinion of the Embassy based upon statements made to it by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and other influential Turks. This, however, conflicts with the statement, recorded at page 3 of my No. 12, by the French Ambassador, Count de Chambrun, who told me the Gazi said

to him

to him that Turkey would move into the two Turkish cities of Aleppo and Alexandretta inside of twenty-four hours after the French moved out. This seemed to me to indicate Turkish desire to repossess themselves of these two largely Turkish cities, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in my several talks with him, has certainly said nothing to change that opinion. I do not believe that the Turks would do anything aggressive to obtain these two cities, for they are well pleased with their present foreign policy of friendship with all foreign countries, especially their neighbors. But I do not believe they would refuse Aleppo and Alexandretta if there were any pacific way of obtaining them. When invited to attend, June 29, the convention now being held over at Scutari in the American Girls' School, I talked with a couple of our people stationed at Aleppo and they confirmed how Turkish a city it is. Today, Mr. Fowle, in charge of that convention, telephoned me that they were putting in charge of their Aleppo School, Mr. Markham, now head of the Erenkeuy School, near Scutari, which must be closed for reasons of economy. I asked Mr. Fowle about Aleppo, and he volunteered that, although it was largely Turkish, Antioch and Alexandretta were even more so. He added that he believed that the French, when the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement set up the autonomous Sandjaks of Alexandretta and Antioch (and permitted there the functioning of Turkish schools), did so with the idea that some day it would prove useful in trading for concessions that France might

might desire from Turkey. The French, by the way, have not carried out these language obligations under that agreement.

There have always been Armenian settlements along the northern border of Syria and these have been augmented by refugees from Turkey. This annoys the Ankara Government considerably, as they blame the Armenians for much of the smuggling on the frontier. This frontier was delimited in the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement in a rather sketchy fashion, most of it along the railway, one rail assigned to Turkey and the other to Syria.

Monsieur Chauvel, political director of Syria, has been in Ankara for several days, conferring with the French Ambassador, and will stay for two or three more, although the Ambassador comes to Istanbul today. One of the Secretaries of the French Embassy says that M. de Chambrun knows practically nothing about Syria and that Monsieur Chauvel only came here to give technical advice and help from the Syrian point of view. I believe, on the contrary that the Ambassador is greatly concerned in settling the Syrian frontier question.

The above-mentioned Secretary thinks that Turkey naturally wishes to rectify the southern frontier, just as any country would like to gain more territory. He also feels that the Turks are just as anxious to have Mosul as they are to gain certain territories in Syria, but that, in his opinion, is beyond the realms of possibility; certainly, if France evacuated Syria, there would be certain preliminary guarantees involved and other countries could not simply step in and help themselves to various

strips

strips of land. That means, there would be trading. The Secretary says that the Turks would strongly object to a united state consisting of Syria, Palestine, Transjordania and Iraq.

This despatch must not be taken as even an implied criticism of Mr. Grew's statement - if he really made it! - but as an expression of my opinion that the attitude of the Turks today has changed so that instead of opposing retrocession of such territory as Aleppo, Antioch or Alexandretta, - largely Turkish in population, - Turkey would welcome it.

Respectfully yours,

CHARLES H. SHERRILL.

Enclosure:

1. Clipping from LE JOURNAL D'ORIENT, July 6, 1932.

COPY SENT E. I. C. PARIS

710
CHS:VM

ENCLOSURE NO. 1

To despatch No. 71 of July 6, 1932,
from the Embassy at Istanbul.

LE JOURNAL D'ORIENT,
July 6, 1932.

Ce que pense M. Joseph Grew, l'ex-ambassadeur des Etats-Unis à Ankara, de la Turquie moderne

« LA REDUCTION DE SON ANCIEN TERRITOIRE A DONNE AU PAYS FORCE ET HOMOGENEITE» DIT LE GRAND DIPLOMATE

Le « Japan Times et Mail » de Tokio qui nous est parvenu par le dernier courrier, publie l'opinion de M. Grew qui, comme on le sait, a représenté les U. S. A. à Ankara pendant cinq ans et a laissé d'ineffaçables souvenirs parmi nous.

Nos lecteurs n'ignorent pas que M. Grew a été appelé à représenter son gouvernement auprès du Mikado.

Les déclarations que nous donnons ci-après, ont été faites par M. Grew à Washingon à l'occasion de son départ pour la capitale japonaise où il se rend pour prendre possession de son poste. Voici ce qu'il dit:

« La Turquie moderne, la Turquie de Mustapha Kemal se distingue par un nationalisme fervent.

« Elle est aujourd'hui beaucoup plus heureuse et beaucoup plus stable que l'empire d'avant-guerre qui englobait une foule de nationalités hetérogènes sur toute l'étendue du Proche-Orient.

« Même si on le lui offrait, la Turquie n'accepterait pas qu'on lui rétrocède la Syrie ou aucun autre territoire qu'elle a perdu.

«Le Gouvernement d'Ankara considère que sa force réside dans son unité et il concentre tous ses efforts sur l'Anatolie et la bande de territoire européen qu'elle délient.

« Mû par cet idéal le Gouvernement turc modernise rapidement le pays.

« Des grands progrès ont été réalisés sous les auspices du Gazi dans le domaine des rélations internationales. Des liens solides d'amitié lient actuellement la Turquie à tous les pays voisins.

« La Turquie actuelle, homogène et pacifique avance à grands pas vers la prospérité sous l'impulsion de son grand animateur, le Gazi. »

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 867.9111/368 FOR Report #-

FROM Istanbul (Allen) DATED July 13, 1932

TO NAME 1—1127 ...

REGARDING: Minister of Foreign Affairs in Turkey said that the boundary between Turkey and Syria had been marked and ratified by the Assembly and he declined to share the opinion of Esat Bey that treaty provisions had not been respected by France.

las

767.90D15/29

767.90 d/15

RECD

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 82

Istanbul, July 11, 1932.

SUBJECT: The French Ambassador's unexpected departure for Paris.

AUG 10 32

FOR DISTRIBUTION - CHECK
To the
In U. S.
No

767.90d15

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AUG 11 1932
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

Early this morning the Embassy receives news that the French Ambassador, Count de Chambrun, left last night via the Orient Express train at 9 p.m. for Paris. Yesterday morning, just before church time, I telephoned him to inquire if he had been inconvenienced by the fact that the train preceding his, returning from Ankara the day before, had met with a serious accident, (delaying his arrival about seven hours). Reply came back that he was in his bath but sent cordial thanks for the inquiry and said that he would see me later. This would indicate that his determination to go to Paris was not reached until later in the day. His unexpected departure on July 10, just before extensive prepared

French

767.90D15/30

FILED

AUG 18 1932

French Independence Day celebrations on the 14th has caused quite a flutter in the diplomatic dove-cot here. Several rumors are afloat. My despatch No. 71 of July 9, 1932, with reference to Turkey's southern policy, tells of the arrival from Syria of the French political director of Syria, Monsieur Chauvel, and also states that he is remaining in Ankara, even though the Ambassador is returning to Istanbul. This might indicate that the Syrian frontier question has come up acutely, and the French Ambassador although going to Paris, is keeping the Syrian official, Monsieur Chauvel, at Ankara to await telegraphic instructions from Paris. The French Governor General of Syria, M. Ponsôt, has just arrived in Paris and that gives further color to the possibility of a Syrian conference at the Quai d'Orsay.

767.00 44

Respectfully yours,

Charles H. Sherrill

Charles H. Sherrill.

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CHS-fm

COPY SENT E. I. C. PARIS

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NOTE

SEE 867.9111/407 FOR Report #-

FROM Istanbul (Allen) DATED Sept.30, 1933

TO NAME 1—1127

REGARDING:

Protocol drawn up by the Turko-Syrian Boundary Commission providing for a more active pursuit of brigands and smugglers operating along the frontier.

767.900 15/31

3/

Wi

767.90 d 15

The CUMHURIYET learns that the Turko-Syrian Boundary Commission, recently assembled at Urfa, drew up a protocol which provides for a more active pursuit of brigands and smugglers operating along the frontier and in general a closer cooperation between the Turkish and Syrian frontier authorities.

The Turko-Syrian Boundary
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Division of Communications

Italy.

Following what has been a custom for some years, one thousand Italian "avanguardisti" recently visited Istanbul and

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

767.90D 15/32

SEE 890d.00/581 FOR #693

FROM Beirut (Goold) DATED May 5,1934

TO NAME

1-1127

REGARDING: Frontier arrangement - Turkey and Syria.
The Vali of Aintab recently visited in Antioch to help settle details of a -- whereby barbed wire will be laid down along the boundary to prevent smuggling.

lec

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

767.90D15/33

SEE 767.90d/19 FOR #594

FROM Turkey (Skinner) DATED Mar.30, 1935

TO NAME 1—1127

REGARDING:

Visit to Turkey of the French High Commissioner to Syria, de Martel, and conversations with the Foreign Minister leading to agreement concerning the frontier.

Wi

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NOTE

SEE 890d.9111/99 FOR Report #-

FROM Beirut (Gaudin) DATED April 6,1935

TO NAME 1—1127

REGARDING: Turkish-Syrian frontier and contraband problems.
M. de Martel returned to Beirut by way of Istanbul on March 30 and issued a statement that an accord had been reached relative to --

lec

767.90D 151/34

34

767.90d/15

M. de Martel returned to Beirut by way of Istanbul on March 30 and immediately issued a statement to the effect that an accord had just been reached with Turkey relative to frontier and contraband problems. He also declared that he intends to collaborate with all well-meaning persons in the pursuance of his policies.[1]

Chamber Discusses Projected Laws

Shortly after its first session last week, the Lebanese Chamber was asked by the Government to discuss certain measures, notably a law which would abolish games of chance (see Economic Section of this report), a regulation decreasing the passport tax from 3 to 1 Syrian Pound, and the matter of how much subsidy to grant the silk-growers.

767.90d15

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

767.90D15/35

SEE 890d.00/664 FOR #208

FROM Beirut (Marriner) DATED May 3, 1937
NAME

TO

1—1127 ors

REGARDING: Kurdish troubles along the Syrian-Turkish frontier.

Statement of the French High Commissioner that troubles are sixty miles within Turkish territory and that matter would not be brought up by Turkey at the Sandjak discussions at Geneva.

W 1

Central File: Decimal File 767.90D15, Political Relations Of States, Relations; Bi-Lateral Treaties., Political., Turkey And Syria, Boundary Questions. Composition Of Differences., Feb. 20, 1931 - May 3, 1937. February 20, 1931 - May 3, 1937. MS Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States: Records of the U.S. Department of State, 1930-1944: Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations of Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States, 1930-1939. National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, link.gale.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FSC5111394539%2FGDSC%3Fu%3Domni%26sid%3Dbookmark-GDSC. Accessed 21 June 2025.